

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REQUIRING FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE CONGRESSIONAL NOTICE OF COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY ASSESSMENTS

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 543) to require the Federal Railroad Administration to provide appropriate congressional notice of comprehensive safety assessments conducted with respect to intercity or commuter rail passenger transportation.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 543

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. NOTICE OF COMPREHENSIVE SAFETY ASSESSMENTS.

(a) INITIAL NOTICE.—Not later than 10 business days after the Federal Railroad Administration initiates a comprehensive safety assessment of an entity providing regularly scheduled intercity or commuter rail passenger transportation, the Federal Railroad Administration shall notify in electronic format the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and each member of Congress representing a State in which the service that is the subject of the assessment being conducted is located, of the initiation of that assessment.

(b) FINDINGS.—Not later than 90 days after completion of a comprehensive safety assessment described in subsection (a), the Federal Railroad Administration shall transmit in electronic format to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and to each member of Congress representing a State in which the service that is the subject of the assessment being conducted is located, its findings of that assessment, including identified defects and any recommendations.

(c) DEFINITION.—For purpose of this section, the term “comprehensive safety assessment” means a focused review of the safety-related processes and procedures, compliance with safety regulations and requirements, and overall safety culture of an entity providing regularly scheduled intercity or commuter rail passenger transportation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 543.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, on the morning of September 29, 2016, a New Jersey Transit train failed to stop, overrode a bumping post at the end of its track, and struck a wall of the Hoboken Terminal in Hoboken, New Jersey.

In the wake of this fatal accident, which killed a young mother and injured 110 passengers and crew members, it was made public that the Federal Railroad Administration had been conducting a so-called “deep audit” of New Jersey Transit, which was prompted by an increase in safety violations.

This bill requires that the FRA provide appropriate congressional notice when the agency initiates and completes a comprehensive safety assessment of an intercity or commuter rail passenger system.

It is important that Members of Congress are informed as soon as Federal safety assessments are underway so that we may work on ways to provide assistance and oversight for our districts’ intercity or commuter passenger rail services and inform our constituents of any safety issues before accidents like what happened in Hoboken occur again.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, this bill would improve safety and transparency for our Nation’s railroads. Our constituents expect no less, by the way.

It requires notification of proper congressional committees and Members of Congress of the initiation of certain safety assessments for passenger railroads and rail transit agencies. Further, upon completion of those safety assessments, the bill requires the Federal Railroad Administration’s findings and recommendations be submitted to the proper committees and all affected Members of Congress.

Rail safety is critical to our Nation. When the FRA begins an in-depth safety assessment of a railroad, it means the agency has identified a significant and serious safety problem. Our constituents expect us to be advised of that, and, in fact, to keep them informed.

It is important that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and affected Members be notified timely both that the investigation is underway and what the agency found as a result of it. Doing so can only help improve the safety of our passenger and commuter railroads, as well as keep our constituents informed.

The bill passed the committee and the House last year unanimously. I certainly hope we can get the Senate to give it considerable concern. I thank my colleague, Mr. SIRE, for his hard

work on this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRE), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. SIRE. Madam Speaker, in 2016, in Hoboken, New Jersey, my district, a New Jersey Transit commuter train ran past the end of the track and into the terminal, killing a young mother and injuring over 100 passengers and crew members.

In the wake of this tragedy, it was made public that the Federal Railroad Administration had been conducting a deep audit on New Jersey Transit for months, prompted by an increase in safety violations. At that time, the safety review was not known to relevant Members of Congress or the public who relied on New Jersey Transit to take them to work and bring them home safely every day.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 543 is a simple, straightforward piece of legislation. When the FRA begins a safety assessment on an intercity or commuter passenger rail system, it must notify Members of Congress and Senators on committees of jurisdiction or representing the State in which the assessment is conducted. The FRA will have 10 business days after the assessment begins to notify these parties.

The FRA will also need to transmit its findings, including any safety recommendations, to the relevant parties within 90 days of completion of the assessment.

Madam Speaker, this bill brings us one step closer to ensuring full transparency for Federal agencies and helps us ensure that our rail transportation infrastructure is safe.

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, this bill, too, was considered in the Republican House. We are considering it here in the Democratic House. I certainly hope that the urgency of this bill is apparent.

I have no further speakers other than the gentleman from New Jersey, who knows this issue perhaps best, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I urge the Senate to move forward, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 543.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REVIVING AMERICA’S SCENIC BYWAYS ACT OF 2019

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the

bill (H.R. 831) to direct the Secretary of Transportation to request nominations for and make determinations regarding roads to be designated under the national scenic byways program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 831

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Reviving America’s Scenic Byways Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAYS PROGRAM.

(a) REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transportation shall issue a request for nominations with respect to roads to be designated under the national scenic byways program, as described in section 162(a) of title 23, United States Code. The Secretary shall make the request for nominations available on the appropriate website of the Department of Transportation.

(b) DESIGNATION DETERMINATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the request for nominations required under subsection (a) is issued, the Secretary shall make publicly available on the appropriate website of the Department of Transportation a list specifying the roads, nominated pursuant to such request, to be designated under the national scenic byways program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 831.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The National Scenic Byways Program was created in 1991 in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act—ISTEA, as it was called—and, since that time, has helped designate and provide funding for 150 scenic roads across the country.

In the consolidation of Federal highways programs in MAP-21, which was enacted in 2012, funding for a separate National Scenic Byways Program was eliminated; however, the authority of the Department of Transportation to continue to designate roads was retained. Unfortunately, the Department of Transportation has not designated any new scenic byways since the dedicated program was eliminated in 2012.

Madam Speaker, this legislation will ensure that there is a process once again for States, Tribes, and Federal land management agencies to request designations for roads that meet the scenic byways criteria.

I thank the sponsor of this legislation, Mr. CICILLINE, who has supported efforts to preserve the scenic beauty of our country’s natural and man-made environments as co-chair of the Congressional America the Beautiful Caucus for introducing this legislation, and I strongly support H.R. 831 and urge my colleagues to join in passing this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 831, and I thank my friend, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for carrying the ball on this one.

Madam Speaker, our scenic byways, the national program, has a few mottos. One of them is: No two experiences are the same. Another one is: Exploring the heart and soul of America.

Madam Speaker, some of the top or most visited tourist destinations in the United States are areas like Central Park and other areas of Manhattan. You have Las Vegas, our own Union Station, Disneyland, Disney World, and the Golden Gate Bridge.

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But some of the real experiences in America are in some of these more scenic areas, and we have such extraordinary treasures in our country. There is much more to America.

By reopening the scenic byways designations, we are giving access to, we are bringing attention to some of these great places, some of these great experiences in helping to highlight those and bring tourists to those areas.

In my home State of Louisiana, we have two right now. Number one, we have the Louisiana Great River Road, a scenic byway which goes along the length of the Mississippi River, through my hometown of Baton Rouge; and, also, the Wetlands Cultural Byway that goes through our wetland areas in south Louisiana’s Sportsman’s Paradise.

Madam Speaker, it really is just incredible. Years ago, the Department of Tourism in Louisiana came up with a motto saying, “the Atchafalaya Basin, America’s Foreign Country,” and I really think that applies to much of south Louisiana, which is home and where I represent. It is such a unique place in terms of the food, the culture, the people. We need to bring more attention to some of these treasures that America has.

I thank, again, my friend from Rhode Island, for carrying the ball on this.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE), my good friend and the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding,

and I am particularly delighted to be here in support of this legislation with the Speaker pro tempore on the rostrum, who understands the value of scenic byways in our beautiful country.

I rise today in strong support of this bipartisan legislation, Reviving America’s Scenic Byways Act.

The National Scenic Byways Program was established by Congress in 1991 in order to recognize, preserve, and enhance designated roadways throughout the United States. Since that time, 150 roads across the country have received the scenic byway designation. However, no new designations have been made since 2009.

Under this program, the Secretary of Transportation designates certain roads as all-American roads or national scenic byways based on one or more archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, or scenic qualities that capture the unique characteristics of a region.

The National Scenic Byways Program is a national asset that showcases our Nation’s natural grandeur, our history, and our culture, as well as being a very significant economic driver of tourism. It has been identified by Brand USA, the organization created by Congress to promote travel to the United States, as a core element in promoting international visitation to the United States and creating tourism-related jobs.

According to the National Scenic Byway Foundation, State departments of transportation report approximately 60 State scenic byways, and nearly 30 States are interested and prepared to seek designation as a national scenic byway or an all-American road.

For example, in my own State, roadways such as Paradise Avenue on Aquidneck Island in Newport and Route 102 are really excellent candidates for designation and all the benefits that will follow.

This bill will allow those States to once again apply for scenic byway designations and directs the Department of Transportation to announce new designations within 1 year of requesting nominations.

I thank the chairman of the committee and the ranking member for their work. I urge passage of this legislation, and conclude by, again, thanking the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES), who is the lead Republican on this legislation, for his partnership, his passion about this issue, his presence here today, and his words in support of the legislation.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. GRAVES, for the surprising yielding.

This is a program, and this bill needs to be passed.

My district in central and southwestern Illinois contains numerous scenic byways, and I am excited that this bill is such a bipartisan bill, too.

This bipartisan bill needs to pass because the Department of Transportation has got to undertake a process to designate the scenic byways in my district, in Rhode Island, in Louisiana, and throughout this Nation, designate them under this program. This good fix is a message of bipartisanship that the President delivered last night on this floor, and I certainly hope this bill passes.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, you see the bipartisan nature of this bill, and it doesn't require us to appropriate any funds, but we can imagine what States would do with this designation on their own.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 831.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 66) to establish the Route 66 Centennial Commission, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to prepare a plan on the preservation needs of Route 66, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 66

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Route 66 Centennial Commission Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Route 66 was the Nation's first all-paved highway under the U.S. Highway System connecting the Midwest to California and has played a major role in the history of the United States.

(2) Route 66 was the symbol of opportunity to hundreds of thousands of people seeking escape from the Dust Bowl in the 1930s, serving as a "road to opportunity" in the West and providing employment during the Great Depression, as thousands were put to work on road crews to pave the road.

(3) Route 66 was invaluable in transporting troops, equipment, and supplies across the country to the West, where the government established multiple industries and armed force bases during World War II. Upon the conclusion of the war in 1945, Route 66 was a key route taken by thousands of troops as they returned home.

(4) Route 66 symbolized the Nation's positive outlook during the postwar economic recovery in the 1950s and 1960s, serving as an icon of free-spirited independence and linking people across the United States. During this period, the tourist industry along Route 66 grew tremendously, giving rise to countless tourist courts, motels, service stations, garages, and diners.

(5) Since June 27, 1985, when Route 66 was decommissioned as a Federal highway, the popularity and mythical stature of Route 66 has grown domestically and internationally, as the road has experienced a rebirth of interest and support.

(6) The year 2026 will be the centennial anniversary of Route 66, and a commission should be established to study and recommend to Congress activities that are fitting and proper to celebrate that anniversary in a manner that appropriately honors America's Mother Road.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.

There is established a commission to be known as the Route 66 Centennial Commission (referred to in this Act as the "Commission").

SEC. 4. DUTIES.

The Commission shall have the following duties:

(1) To study activities that may be carried out by the Federal Government to determine whether the activities are fitting and proper to honor Route 66 on the occasion of its centennial anniversary, including any of the activities described under section 8(b)(2)(B).

(2) To recommend to Congress the activities the Commission considers most fitting and proper to honor Route 66 on such occasion, to be carried out by the Department of Transportation and any other entity or entities within the Federal Government that the Commission considers most appropriate to carry out such activities.

(3) To plan and host, in cooperation with such partners, a conference on the U.S. Numbered Highway System, and assist in the activities of such a conference.

SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP.

(a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be composed of 19 members appointed as follows:

(1) Three members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President.

(2) Two members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Secretary of Transportation.

(3) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Illinois.

(4) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Missouri.

(5) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Kansas.

(6) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Oklahoma.

(7) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Texas.

(8) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of New Mexico.

(9) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Arizona.

(10) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of California.

(11) Three members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in consultation with the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(12) Three members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the majority leader of the Senate, in consultation with the minority leader of the Senate.

(b) QUALIFIED CITIZEN.—A qualified citizen described in this subsection is a private citizen of the United States with—

(1) a demonstrated dedication to educating others about the importance of historical figures and events; and

(2) substantial knowledge and appreciation of Route 66.

(c) TIME OF APPOINTMENT.—Each initial appointment of a member of the Commission shall be made before the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP.—If a member of the Commission was appointed to the Commission as a Member of Congress, and ceases to be a Member of Congress, that member may continue to serve on the Commission for not longer than the 30-day period beginning on the date that member ceases to be a Member of Congress.

(e) TERMS.—Each member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(f) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall not affect the powers of the Commission but shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(g) BASIC PAY.—Members shall serve on the Commission without pay.

(h) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(i) QUORUM.—Seven members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(j) CHAIR.—The President, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, shall designate one member of the Commission as Chair.

(k) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chair.

SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF.

(a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission may appoint and fix the pay of a Director and such additional personnel as the Commission considers to be appropriate.

(b) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE LAWS.—

(1) DIRECTOR.—The Director of the Commission may be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(2) STAFF.—The staff of the Commission shall be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

SEC. 7. POWERS.

(a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold such hearings, sit and act at